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Harvard says professor didn't violate rules

CIA-financed research contract did not significantly involve university, report says

By Richard Higgins
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Harvard University yesterday ruled that a professor who engaged in research financed by the Central Intelligence Agency did not violate Harvard rules because the contract did not significantly involve the university.

However, said A. Michael Spence, dean of the faculty, "there is a problem of the general awareness of [Harvard's] policies" concerning outside sponsorship of research, adding he will act to "clarify and communicate" the responsibilities of professors.

Spence's report followed his inquiry into CIA funding of research by Samuel P. Huntington, Eaton professor of government and head of Harvard's Center for International Affairs, and Richard K. Betts, a visiting part-time professor of government.

After their study of the demise of dictatorships was given to the CIA, it was turned into a paper

published in a journal sponsored and edited by Harvard, "International Security".

The CIA contract was signed in 1984 by Betts, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington, before he became a Harvard employee. According to the report, Betts asked Huntington to help him work on the project and paid for the assistance of a graduate student.

The contract Betts signed required that the CIA's sponsorship not be disclosed in any subsequent published work and granted the CIA the right to review it before any publication.

Harvard's rules for institutional contracts permit professors to work for the CIA but forbid contracts that cannot be publicly revealed.

However, Spence said, Harvard's rules for such contracts did not apply in this case because Betts had no Harvard affiliation at the time he entered into the

contract. He said the graduate student collected data in a Harvard library "primarily using government documents" that are public.

"Harvard's institutional involvement in the contract was not significant," Spence said.

Huntington had said previously that he told Spence about the CIA contract last fall, following disclosures of CIA funding for Harvard professor Nadav Safran. Huntington said he didn't tell

Spence earlier because he didn't believe he was required to.

Spence confirmed yesterday that Huntington had informed him about the contract. Harvard rules covering individual research grants with intelligence agencies require the professors involved to notify their deans in writing.

Spence said yesterday that, "because of the indirect involvement" of Huntington, "it was appropriate for this contract to be reported to me."